REGULATIONS

OF

SISTERS OF CHARITY

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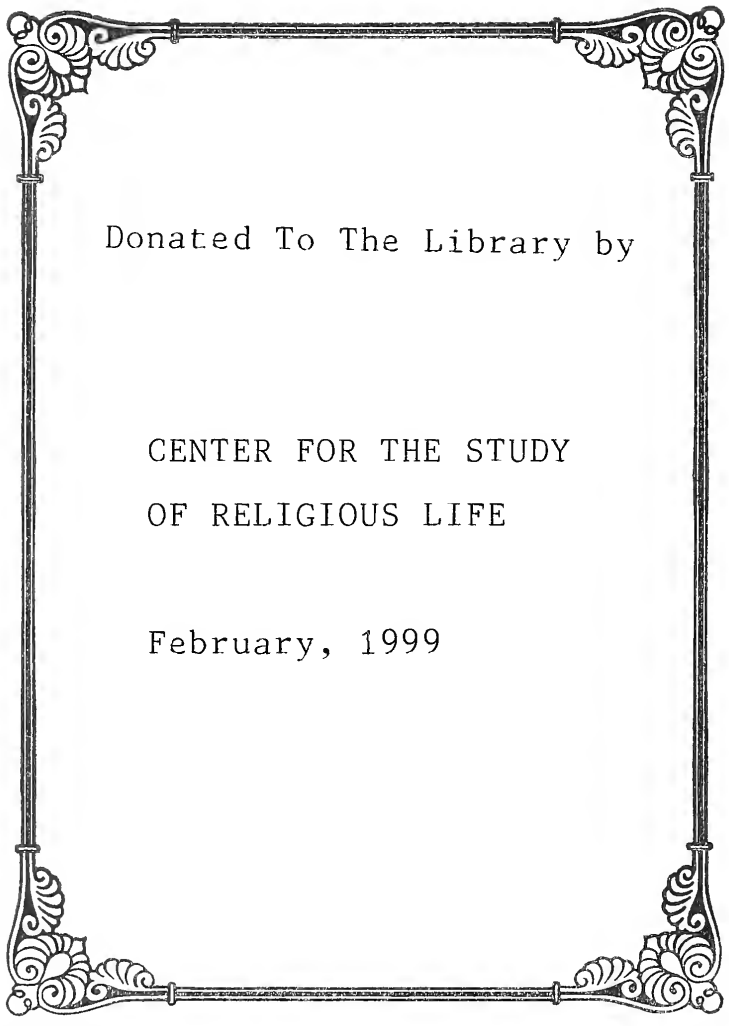
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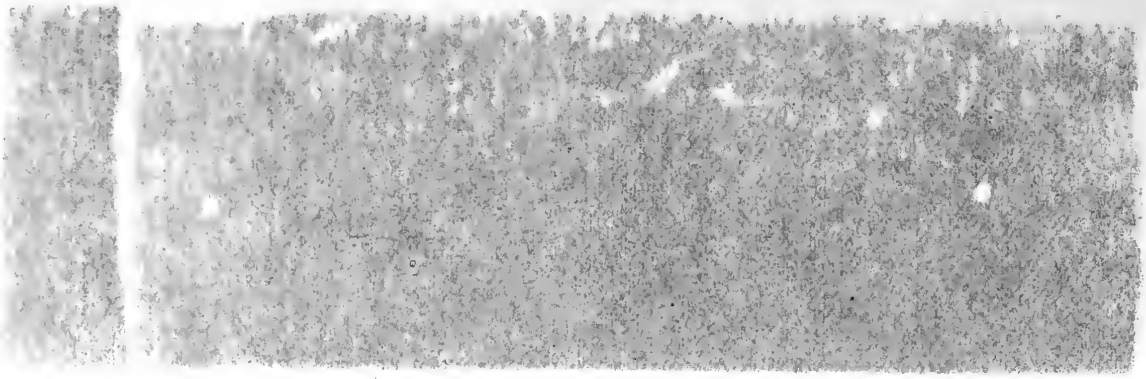

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RULES AND REGULATIONS

—FOR—

THE ORDER

—OF—

Sisters of Charity

—OF—

PITTSBURG AND ALLEGHENY,

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

BENZIGER BROS.
PRINTERS TO THE HOLY APOSTOLIC SEE.
1870.

REGULATIONS

OF THE

SISTERS OF CHARITY,

U. S. AMERICA.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Ends of their Order, and of the Virtues Peculiar to their State.

ARTICLE I.

The principal end for which God has called and assembled the Sisters of Charity, is to honor Jesus Christ our Lord, the source and model of all charity, by rendering Him every temporal and spiritual service in their power, in the persons of the poor, either sick, invalid, prisoners, insane, or those who, through shame, would conceal their necessity.

A secondary, but not less important motive, is to honor the sacred childhood of Jesus Christ in the young persons whose hearts they are called to form to the love of God, the practice of every virtue, and the knowledge of religion, whilst they sow in their tender minds the seeds of useful knowledge.

To correspond with the grace of their vocation, and fulfill with merit to themselves and advantage to others the great obligations which it imposes, their own perfection should be the principal object, the latent spring of all their endeavors. To attain this end, the

exercises of an interior and spiritual life must accompany their exterior employments, according to the following regulations, which they shall strive to practice with the utmost fidelity, as the means most conducive to the exalted end of their holy vocation, and let their motto ever be, "Who lives to the Rule, lives to God."

II.

Although they are not an enclosed order, the cloister not being compatible with the objects of their institution, nevertheless, as they are more exposed than nuns, in most cases their only monastry being a hospital or an asylum; their chapel, the parish church; their cloister, the public streets; their enclosure, obedience; their grate, the fear of God; their veil, holy modesty; they should lead as virtuous lives as if in the retirement of a cloister, and comport themselves, in all their intercourse with the world, with as much recollection, purity of heart and body, and detachment from creatures, as nuns in the seclusion of their monastery.

III.

The first thing which they must inviolably observe, is to place the salvation of their souls above every other consideration, and to spare no pains to keep themselves always in a state of grace, shunning mortal sin, and using their utmost endeavors, with the assistance of God, not to commit, deliberately, any venial sin. To obtain from God the grace necessary for this purpose, and to secure to themselves the reward which our Lord promises to those who devote themselves to the service of His little ones, they must diligently apply to the acquisition of Christian virtues, particularly of those recommended to them in the following Rules.

IV.

They shall perform all their exercises, both spiritual and temporal, in a spirit of humility, simplicity, and charity, and in union with those which our Lord Jesus performed on earth. They should direct their intention to that end, in the morning, and at the beginning of every action, particularly when going to serve the sick, or to instruct their pupils, remembering that these three virtues must, like the three

faculties of the soul, animate the whole body, and that they constitute the proper spirit of the Order.

V.

They shall abhor the maxims of the world, and embrace those of Jesus Christ, especially such as recommend mortification, both interior and exterior, the contempt of themselves and of all earthly things. They shall prefer low employments, and such as are repugnant to the inclinations of nature, to honorable and pleasing ones, and take always the last place, fully persuaded that still they are far from suffering all that their sins deserve.

VI.

They shall have no attachment to any thing earthly, particularly to places, employments, or persons.—not even to their parents or confessors; but they shall always be disposed to quit *All*, at the voice of obedience, calling to mind the words of our Lord: "Every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother ..... or children, or lands, for my name' sake, shall receive a hundred fold, and shall possess life everlasting." *Matthew* xix: 29; x: 37. *Mark* x: 29, 30. *Luke* xviii: 29, 30.

VII.

They shall, for the love of God, suffer cheerfully inconveniences, contradictions, scoffings, calumnies, and other mortifications which they may have to endure, even for their good actions, remembering that our Saviour, who was innocence itself, bore far greater sufferings, and even prayed for those who crucified Him; and that, in all their pains, they have but a small share in the cross which He was pleased to carry, in order to merit for them the happiness of beholding Him forever in Heaven.

VIII.

They shall have an entire confidence in Divine Providence, abandoning themselves to it without reserve, as an infant to its

nurse, firmly persuaded that, whilst they are faithful to their vocation and to the observance of their Rule, God will keep them under His protection, and assist them in every necessity of soul and body, even when they seem deprived of every resource.

CHAPTER II.

Of the Obligation of the Vow of Poverty.

ARTICLE I.

The Sisters of Charity shall hold in great honor the poverty of Jesus Christ, contenting themselves with what is necessary, in the usual simplicity, and according to the usage of the Community. They shall consider that they are the servants of the poor, and that, consequently, they should themselves lead a life of poverty.

Accordingly, all possessions shall be common property, as among the first Christians; and no one, either at the Mother-House, or on the missions, shall have anything to keep, or to use, as her own individual property. They shall not dispose, either by gifts or loans, of anything belonging to the Community, or of what might remain in their hands, of the allowance given them for their maintenance, still less of anything deposited with them for the benefit of the poor. They shall not borrow, purchase, or receive anything without the consent of the Mother, in matters of little import, and for common use; for extraordinary things, or things of value, they must have leave also of the Reverend Superior.

II.

They shall endeavor to establish themselves in that holy practice, so much recommended by the Saints, and so religiously observed in all well-regulated communities, of neither asking or refusing any

thing in temporal matters. Should they be in need, however, of any article, they may, with simplicity, make it known to the Sister who has charge of supplying their wants, remaining equally satisfied whether their petition be granted or not. That there may be no occasion to deviate from this holy practice, the Sister, whose duty it is, shall be very exact about enquiring into the wants of the Sisters, and in supplying them without extravagance, and according to the resources of the House.

III.

As they must not, without permission, appropriate to their own use any thing destined for the Community, or for some other Sister, so they must not complain if, at any time, the use of an article, already granted to them, should be transferred with superior permission to some one else; but they should be pleased, rather, to have an opportunity of practicing mortification and holy poverty. Should they know or suspect, however, that this transfer had been made without permission, they may disclose their thoughts to the Mother or Sister Servant, but to no one else.

They shall not lay aside or change, without permission, the things granted them for their own use, because they are not agreeable to their taste, or ever presume to alter them to suit their own inclinations.

IV.

They shall be conscientiously careful in the management of money or other things in their charge, considering that any willful neglect on this head would be a sin against the virtue of poverty, which they promised to practice from the moment they put on the habit and assumed the name of servants of the poor. Accordingly, whatever resources the charity of the people or their own industry may place at their disposal, either at the Mother-House or at the establishments to which they may be sent, neither the Mother, nor the Officers, nor the Sisters, shall ever deviate in their dress, food, furniture, etc., from the strictest simplicity, and that spirit of poverty so earnestly inculcated by their holy founder. They should remember that whatever remains in their hands, after their necessities are supplied, is intended either to extend their establishment

for the public good, or to be applied to the relief of the poor. At the Mother-House, the Rev. Superior, Mother and Officers direct the disposition of any surplus funds. In the other establishments this duty belongs to the administrators of hospitals, the managers of asylums, etc. The Sister Servants, once a year, shall lay before the Mother and Council the receipts and expenditures of their missions, the surplus, if any, to be at the disposal of said Council.

V.

As perfect uniformity in all things is an excellent means of preserving union and good order in a Community, and every singularity is a source of dissension, irregularity and confusion, the Sisters of Charity, both at the Mother-House and on the missions, shall preserve inviolably a uniform mode in their dress, food, and furniture. To obviate the abuses which might creep in with respect to their dress, those who do not reside in the Mother-House shall receive from the Mother samples of materials to be used, that they may procure the like; or, if they cannot procure such, they shall send to her a sample of that which they can get, and receive her approbation.

In the various establishments they shall conform, as much as possible, to the maxims, practices, and usages of the Mother-House, not adopting new ones, though apparently better calculated to aid them in the attainment of perfection. Should, however, any individual, after mature deliberation in the presence of God, think that she stands in need of any particular indulgence on account of indisposition, she shall make, with simplicity and indifference, her representations to the Mother, and await submissively her decision.

VI.

They shall practice holy poverty in time of sickness, contenting themselves with the ordinary treatment of the poor as regards medicines, nourishment and the like, never fretting or murmuring at not being treated according to their fancy. They should consider that they are the servants of the poor, and not expect to be better treated than their masters; and, moreover, that it is a great happiness for them to have something to suffer for the love of God, who

exercises their patience only to increase their merit. They shall never cause anything to be bought for themselves, or receive any thing without the permission of the Mother or Sister Servant. The Sisters who visit them can give them nothing without the same permission. Should strangers wish to treat them with delicacies, they shall humbly thank them, but respectfully decline their offers, except in case of great necessity, then they may, with permission, accept them.

As they cannot know so well as the physician and infirmarian what is proper for them, they should consequently abandon to them the care of their health.

VII.

They shall eat only at the appointed hours, and in no other place than the refectory or infirmary, except with a special or general permission.

Whilst they reside in the Mother-House, they shall never, without permission, invite any stranger, either to eat or take lodgings in the house. They, likewise, who live in other establishments, are warned against taking such a liberty, even with their relations, without the consent of their Sister Servant, who can give it only in cases of great necessity, and then only to persons of their own sex, and with a general or special permission of the Mother. Were there no other evil in such a practice than that of disposing of the property of the poor, that should be sufficient to deter them.

CHAPTER III.

Of the Obligations of the Vow of Chastity.

ARTICLE I.

The Sisters of Charity shall use their utmost endeavors to preserve unsullied the purity of their bodies and hearts; to this effect they shall quickly reject all thoughts contrary to the virtue of purity and carefully shun everything that might, in any manner, injure it, particularly vanity, a desire of pleasing, or affectation, either in their dress, their deportment, or their conversation; the curiosity to see people through the windows, or those whom they meet in passing through the streets. They shall still more carefully avoid the highly improper custom of going to the windows to look at strangers passing or repassing. They shall avoid, also, holding frequent communications with strangers when not commanded by either necessity or charity. In fine, they shall carefully guard against whatever might give the least occasion to suspect them of having a worldly spirit, so incompatible with their vow of Chastity; for that suspicion alone, even were it ill-founded, would be more injurious to their Order and its holy functions than all crimes that might be falsely imputed to them.

II.

As holy modesty is necessary to them, both for the edification of others and the preservation of that angelical purity which is so easily tarnished, they shall be extremely careful never to depart from its rigid rules. Accordingly, they shall keep their eyes modestly cast down in the streets, in churches, and in the houses of strangers, and even among themselves in their own rooms, during prayers, pious colloquies, meals, and the time devoted to silence. They shall avoid, moreover, precipitancy in their walking and other

actions; preserve cleanliness in their garments without affectation, and abstain, even in their recreation, from childish levity, immoderate laughter, unbecoming discourses or gestures, or such amusements as might lead to any indelicacy. They shall never touch one another without necessity—not even in play, or in token of friendship, except to salute, in a spirit of charity, the Sisters on the day they receive the habit, or make their vows, or those who return after an absence, or to effect a reconciliation with any one to whom they may have given some uneasiness; in these cases, they are permitted to kiss one another on the cheek, but not in the street, the church, or any other public place. When a reconciliation is to be effected, they must do it kneeling.

The Sisters are permitted to return the salutation when persons present their hands, but they should never make the advance.

III.

They must carefully shun idleness, as the parent of all vices, particularly of impurity. To this end, whenever their duties allow them some leisure moments, they shall faithfully employ them in sewing, knitting or some such work. Should they have no work of the kind, they must ask it of the Mother or her assistant; those residing in other establishments must apply to the Sister Servant.

They shall never keep birds, lap-dogs, or any animal which might be to them an occasion of idling away their time, which they ought to be very scrupulous of loosing, remembering that God will demand of them a strict account of every moment.

They shall not spend their time on week days in saying any prayers but those prescribed to them by the Rule, and they shall not hear more than one Mass without a special permission of the Mother or Sister Servant, who is not to grant it if these devotions would interfere with their exterior duties.

IV.

As an ill-regulated intercourse with strangers may prove as detrimental to their purity, as it is meritorious and advantageous to them, when directed by obedience or charity, they shall never go abroad without the permission of the Mother, whom, on their return, they shall acquaint with occurences of any moment that took

place whilst they were abroad. Those who live in other establishments will do the same with the Sister Servant, who shall likewise, before going out, inform the second in authority. On these occasions, before leaving the house, the Sisters shall repair to the chapel or oratory, take holy-water, and, on their knees, offer to the Lord the action they are going to perform, imploring his blessing and the grace not to offend Him. On their return, they shall repair again to their chapel or oratory to return thanks to our Lord for His gracious protection, and to ask His pardon for the faults which they may have committed.

V.

They shall pay no visits, except in cases of necessity, to solicit contributions, etc., but visits of mere ceremony are absolutely forbidden. No Sister can go abroad without another Sister as companion.

VI.

They shall never visit, even through motives of charity, any person of loose, suspicious character; nor attend, or administer medicines to any body notorious for the vice of impurity.

As to other poor sick people, particularly those of the other sex, they shall be very cautious in administering remedies to them, or in attending them; not going too near them, even when preparing them for death, or during their agony.

VII.

When strangers visit them, they shall not enter into conversation with them, or introduce them to any Sister, till they have obtained permission to that effect from the Mother or Sister Servant, and then they must receive them in the place destined for the reception of strangers; but they shall never, without the permission of the Rev. Superior, introduce them into the interior of the house (even were they persons of their own sex), whatever their respectability. They shall act in the same manner with priests, even their confessors, except in time of sickness. In such cases there must be always another Sister present; should this be impracticable on account of the smallness of the room, the door must be left open.

They shall use the same precautions with physicians, or other persons duly authorized to visit them in case of sickness. With much greater reason shall they refrain from visiting their confessors, or other priests, in their chambers, unless they are very sick; then they are allowed to visit them, but there must be at least two Sisters present. When, on other occasions, it is necessary to speak to clergymen at their houses, let it be done in some public part thereof, and never at undue hours. At the Mother-House, or in the other establishments, such interviews should take place only in a room destined for the reception of visitors. They should avoid remaining alone with persons of the other sex, even for a short time, unless the door be open.

At the Mother-House, none of the Sisters, not even the Mother, shall ever invite any gentlemen, whether clergymen or not, to spend the night; such permission being reserved to higher authority.

VIII.

Whenever they meet with persons of the other sex, they must observe a great modesty in their words, and in all their exterior, taking care not to show too much cordiality or complaisance, and to be as brief as possible, even when conversing on matters of piety, on what concerns the relief of the poor, or any subject of a similar nature; above all, they shall never suffer from them any kind of familiarity. They shall not be taught by men, except with permission of the Rev. Superior.

IX.

When passing through the streets, they shall not stop to speak with any one, without great necessity; even then they shall endeavor to satisfy the demands in a few words, and they should prudently evade, by some pious remark, any worldly conversation.

They shall studiously avoid inquiring into the conduct not only of strangers, but also of their Sisters. They shall avoid inquiring likewise, into private family concerns (though it should be done under pretext of consoling the poor), such curiosity being very contrary to a spirit of devotion, and to the good example which they owe to their neighbor.

X.

As temperance and regularity in their meals will greatly contribute to the health of both soul and body, and particularly to the preservation of chastity, the Sisters on the missions shall do their utmost to comform to the regulations observed at the Mother-House, both with regard to the quality of their food, and to the time and place of taking their meals. No one shall make use of wine or spirituous liquor, except when ordered by physicians, and not even then without the express permission of the Mother or Sister Servant.

XI.

Although the continual labors of the Sisters of Charity do not permit them to embrace many penitential practices and corporal austerities, they may perform small ones, with the permission of the Mother. Should they desire to perform extraordinary works of the kind, they must obtain the consent of the Rev. Superior. Unless they obtain the above permission, they shall content themselves with observing the fasts prescribed by the Church, following the rules of the diocese in which they reside. To the days of fasting prescribed by the Church, they shall add only the eve of the festival of St. Vincent of Paul; but let them be convinced that exterior mortifications avail but little if not animated and accompanied by those that are interior, which consist in submitting their judgment and inclinations to the will of their superiors in combating and overcoming their passions and evil propensities, and in refusing to their senses every unnecessary gratification.

XII.

Except on journeys authorized or commanded by their Superiors, and never under any pretence of kindred, friendship, or indisposition, shall Sisters take their meals, much less spend the night, out of their own houses. In extraordinary cases, however, they may be permitted, accompanied by another Sister, to sit up with a sick friend or parent.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Obligation of the Vow of Obedience.

ARTICLE I.

The Sisters of Charity shall pay honor and obedience to the Rules of their Institute; to the Superior General of their Society, and those whom he may delegate to direct or visit them; to the Mother; to the other Officers of the Community, in what may relate to their respective offices; to the Sister Servants under whom they may be placed; those to whose charge they may be committed during their journeys; also to the Bishops in whose respective dioceses they may be established, in all things compatible with their rules and the intentions of their Superiors. They shall obey, likewise, without delay, the sound of the Community bell, as they would the voice of our Lord calling them to their regular exercises.

II.

They shall aim, above all, at a punctual obedience, with submission of their judgment and will (in all that is not sinful) to all Superiors and Officers; to those who are imperfect and disagreeable, as well as those who are perfect and agreeable, remembering that it is not so much persons they obey as Jesus Christ, who orders them by the voice of Superiors.

III.

When Sisters are sent to some congregation, either to serve the poor sick, or to keep a school, on their arrival they shall go to receive, on their knees, the blessing of the priest who attends that congregation, and, as long as they reside there, shall render to him the obedience due to his sacred office. They shall do all in their power,—not contrary to their Rules—to co-operate with their Pastor in furthering the interests of his congregation; but they

shall never, *under any consideration*, take charge of Altars, Sacristies, or Choirs, outside their own Convents. They shall evince *always* great respect for the sacerdotal character, particularly with regard to those clergymen appointed to hear their confessions, and to the confessors of the poor, entertaining for them, on every occasion, as much veneration as when they are at the sacred altar, and submitting to their orders or advice in every thing hat is not sinful or contrary to the rules and practices of the Order or to the intentions of their Superiors.

On no occasion shall they take upon themselves to censure the conduct of priests, or, in any way, meddle with their affairs.

IV.

They shall pay respect and obedience in what concerns the service of the poor; to the administrators of hospital; to physicians, and to all others who by their office may have claims to their respect and obedience.

They shall, when nurses, as well as when sick themselves, punctually attend to the prescriptions of the physician, and obey him in every thing belonging to his profession and not contrary to their Rule.

When sick, they shall obey also the infirmarians, or nurses, according to the degree of authority given to them by their office or Superior.

V.

They shall not open the letters or notes addressed to them, nor write any without the permission of the Mother. All letters and notes are to be submitted to the Mother's inspection; but she may read them or not, as she judges proper, and she shall use her discretion in giving or withholding those addressed to the Sisters, and in forwarding or suppressing those which they write. On the missions the Sister Servants will use, in this respect, the right of the Mother.

VI.

The preceding Rule, however, does not regard the letters written to the Rev. Superior, or the Mother, or those received from them. These letters are never to be shown to any one. If they contain

any intelligence which should be communicated to others, the communication must be made verbally, or in writing.

VII.

The Sister Servants shall be careful to write to the Mother frequently, to give her an account of their employments, and of what relates to their companions; besides, they and their companions shall write to the Rev. Superior, or to the Mother, whenever they have anything of consequence to impart. The Sister Servants shall grant always unrestricted permission to write to Superiors without expressing any desire to see the letters written to them, or those received from them.

CHAPTER V.

Of Charity and Union among the Sisters.

ARTICLE I.

They shall frequently call to mind the name of "Sisters of Charity," with which they are honored, and endeavor to render themselves worthy of it by a true and sincere love for God and their neighbor. Above all things, they shall cherish and respect one another as true Sisters whom our Lord has united in His service by a special profession of charity, and do their utmost to preserve a perfect union among themselves. To this effect they shall suppress quickly every sentiment of aversion or envy which they might feel against their Sisters, and carefully avoid every thing rude or disagreeable in language, tone, or manner, always treating one another with Christian meekness and respectful cordiality, which should be expressed both in their words and on their countenances.

II.

They must willingly bear with the imperfections of their Sisters, as they would wish their Sisters to bear with theirs, and, as much as possible, accommodate themselves to their dispositions and opinions in all that is not sinful or contrary to their Rules. They must be particularly attentive always to evince the greatest charity towards those whose inclinations and dispositions are the least congenial with their own, for this holy condescension, united with mutual support, is an excellent means of cherishing peace and union in a community.

III.

When through human frailty, a Sister gives some cause of mortification to any of her Sisters, she must not fail to ask her pardon, on her knees; this she should do, at the latest, before going to bed. This holy practice will prove a speedy and sovereign remedy to heal the bitterness of heart or remove the resentment which might remain for the fault committed. That the salutary effects may not be prevented, she who shall receive the offense must be very careful not to embrace the opportunity of her Sister's humiliation to satisfy the inclinations of her nature by exaggerating her fault, or using harsh expressions or reproaches, although she may have often fallen into the same fault. She shall go on her knees and receive the apology of her Sister with humility and kindness.

IV.

They shall, particularly on the missions abroad, take the greatest care of their sick Sisters, considering them as the servants of Jesus Christ, inasmuch as they are the servants of his members, the poor, and their own Sisters, inasmuch as they are all, in a particular manner, daughters of the same Father, God, and of the same Mother, their Order. On these considerations, they shall render them their services with all possible affection and exactness. They shall be particularly careful, above all, to give timely notice to the confessor when a Sister is sick, that she may receive the sacraments and other spiritual assistance of which she may stand in need. With

regard to the treatment of the body, they shall observe what has been prescribed in the sixth article of the chapter on poverty.

V.

They shall not make use of any medicine without the permission of the Mother or Sister Servant. As too great a tenderness for self, which is contrary to well-ordered charity and to a prudent care of health, might induce the Sisters, particularly those on the missions, to disclose their trifling indisposition to a physician, who, by prescribing remedies through mere compliance with their wishes, might expose them to serious injury, they shall never consult any physician without the permission of the Mother or Sister Servant, who shall not grant it unless she sees a real necessity.

The Mother and Sister Servant must themselves endeavor to give example to the others in the practice of this rule. All, after their recovery, shall resume cheerfully their ordinary employments, without making a longer use of the particular dispensation granted during their sickness.

VI.

Sisters are not allowed to follow a corpse to the graveyard unless the deceased be members of their Community, distinguished benefactors, orphans, or others under their care. They may attend, if convenient, the funerals of those Sisters who die at or near the place of their residence. They shall offer for the repose of the soul of every Sister that dies the first three Communions which they will receive on the usual days, and the nine Rosaries which they will say on the following days; besides, at the Mother-House, they shall have a High Mass and three Low Masses offered for each one of the deceased Sisters.

CHAPTER VI

Of Some Means of Preserving Charity and Union Among Themselves.

ARTICLE I.

Although they ought to entertain a great love for one another, nevertheless, they must guard carefully against private friendships, which are even more dangerous than aversions, because they are generally veiled under a cloak of charity, while, in reality, they are nothing but a disorderly affection of flesh and blood. Both these vicious extremes should be avoided, as they tend to subvert, in a little time, the whole Order.

II.

As murmurs, which ordinarily spring from a curious desire to know all that passes, under pretence of zeal for the common good, are not less prejudicial to the peace and union of a community than the two preceding vices, in order to remove the occasions of them, the Sisters shall avoid enquiring into or speaking of the transactions of their Order; the reasons for which Sisters are sent out or recalled; the qualifications of Sisters for the occupations assigned them; or the rules of their Order, with the view of finding some ground of censure or complaint. Should they observe, however, any thing which appears to them of consequence, they shall make known their sentiments to the Rev. Superior or Mother, with humility and simplicity, and without giving themselves any further anxiety. They must take great care not to murmur against the conduct or the proceedings of the Mother or Sister Servant; for all sorts of murmurs are a source of scandal and disunion, drawing down the malediction of God, not only on those who murmur, but also on those who give a willing ear to their murmurs, and even to all the Community.

III.

They shall be on their guard against making the faults of their neighbor, particularly those of their Sisters, the subject of their conversation; also against relating at home what they may have heard abroad, except such things as would tend to edify or afford innocent recreation, unless there should be an obligation to make Superiors acquainted with things of a different nature. Should any one forget her duty so far as to introduce discourse contrary to charity in the presence of her Sisters, they, far from listening to her, shall do all in their power to prevent her continuing. Should she not desist even then, they must withdraw, in order to avoid all participation in her scandal.

IV.

As silence is the most efficacious means to prevent the numerous faults committed by the tongue against charity, and also many other sins which, as the Holy Scripture testifies, those who talk too much are sure to commit, they shall observe strict silence from evening prayers until after the meditation of the next day; from two o'clock in the afternoon until three; and at all times when passing through the streets. Should they find it necessary to speak together during these periods, they must do so in a very low voice and in as few words as possible. They shall observe silence, moreover, in churches, chapels, sacristies, domestic oratories, and in the refectory during meals. During recollection they shall discourse in that low tone which public edification and their holy state require. They shall be careful, when passing through the house, not to make a noise in opening or shutting the doors, or by walking heavily, particularly during the night, or when they are with the sick.

CHAPTER VII.

Of Charity Towards the Sick Poor.

ARTICLE I.

One of their chief employments being to assist the sick poor, they shall fulfill this duty with every possible care and affection, recollecting that it is on Jesus Christ, in their persons, that they bestow their services. With this view, they shall treat with compassion, mildness, cordiality, and respect, even the most troublesome, or those for whom they feel some aversion or less interest. They must be conscientiously careful never to let them suffer for want of the necessary assistance, medicines, etc., which they must give always at the exact time and in a proper manner. They shall postpone even their spiritual exercises, when the necessary attendance on the poor sick demands such a sacrifice.

II.

They must suggest to them, from time to time, some pious thoughts, in order to dispose them to practice patience, or to make a good general confession, or to die well. They shall be very careful to instruct them in the things necessary for salvation, and procure for them, in due time, the holy sacraments, and even more than once, if necessary.

III.

As ill directed charity is displeasing to God, and prejudicial to the souls of those who practice it, they shall never give any nourishment or medicine to the sick, contrary to the orders which they have received, or the will of those on whom they depend, not heeding the complaints of the discontented patients.

They must endeavor, however, to console and satisfy them in the best manner they can by evincing compassion for their afflictions, and regret at not being able to assist them according to their wishes.

IV.

When any charitable person gives them alms for the poor sick or for other needy persons, they shall be very exact in distributing them according to the intentions of the benefactors. If they have poor relations, they must be particularly guarded on this point; because natural love, under pretext of charity, might deceive them; moreover, they shall never ask assistance for their relatives without permission of the Superior.

V.

They shall not take charge of the sick out of their own houses without permission of the Rev. Superior, who is not to grant it for the night.

VI.

They shall not employ servants, or other persons, to assist them in their duties, without the express permission of the Rev. Superior.

At the Mother-House, they will keep a boarding-school; and admit for eight days (but not longer), persons of their own sex, who desire to make a spiritual retreat.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of Spiritual Practices.

ARTICLE I.

The Sisters shall endeavor to acquit themselves of their spiritual duties with fidelity, as having especial need of them, to preserve themselves in the state of grace, and in the fervor necessary to enable them to persevere in their holy vocation. Although they ought to make no scruple of sometimes changing the hours appointed for them, or even of omitting some of them, when the care of the sick or other pressing duties require such a sacrifice; yet, they must be very careful not to omit them through negligence or indevotion, or through too great an inclination for exterior duties,—these motives being often veiled under the pretence of charity.

They shall not associate themselves, either at the Mother-House, or on the missions, with any Confraternity, without the permission of the Rev. Superior.

II.

They shall go to confession, once a week, to the confessors appointed by the Rev. Superior; but they shall not go to any other without his permission. They shall have an opportunity, besides, of applying three or four times a year to an extraordinary confessor, to whom, if they think proper, they may make a confession; they must at least present themselves, were it only to receive his spiritual advice. They may make a review of the faults committed since the last visit, if they so desire; should they prefer to make this review to their ordinary confessor, they will do it every three months.

III.

Every year, at an appointed time, they shall make a spiritual retreat, also, a review of the faults committed since the last retreat. Those who reside at a distance from the Mother-House shall repair thither every year for the purpose of making a spiritual retreat, having previously obtained the permission of the Mother. Sometimes the inconvenience of Sisters traveling from certain places is so great that the point of the Rule may be dispensed with, and they will be satisfied with the proviso made in the following article.

IV.

They who are stationed in distant establishments shall make their spiritual retreats under the direction of the clergyman at the place of their residence, or of some one duly appointed.

V.

They may receive Holy Communion on all the days specified in the "Catalogue of Communion Days," but not oftener, except on some extraordinary occasion, when a general communion may be granted by the Mother. Each Sister is entitled to an extra Communion day, which she may select according to her devotion.

When ever a Sister is prevented by any duty of the Community from going to Communion on the appointed days, she may go either the day before or the day after. When, on account of traveling, sitting up with the sick, or protracted illness, Sisters are prevented from receiving Holy Communion on the proper days, they may make them up afterwards. They shall not receive Holy Communion on two successive days if they find it necessary to go to confession for the second Communion. In order to obviate the abuses which might arise from a general permission to go to Communion, and to add the merit of obedience to the grace of the sacrament, they shall each time ask the permission of the Mother of Sister Servant.

VI.

Every Friday, except Good Friday, or one which coincides with some feast of obligation, at five o'clock in the evening, or at any other hour which the Mother may find more convenient, they shall attend a Chapter held by the Mother, or some one of her appointment. In this Chapter, each one, on her knees, and in the presence of all the others, shall accuse herself of her faults against the Rule, ask pardon for any cause of mortification or bad example that she may have given, and cheerfully receive the advice and penance given her. Once a month, moreover, each one shall request to be accused of the faults which may have been remarked in her, and the Sisters shall comply with her request, in a spirit of humility and charity, without mentioning any fault committed against themselves in particular. The Sister accused shall receive the accusation with humility, not excusing herself or betraying any displeasure. In the establishments abroad, the Chapter will be held by the Sister Servant.

VII.

As many serious inconveniences, even the destruction of the Community, might arise from the Sisters disburdening their hearts to whomsoever they please, they shall not disclose their temptations or other interior trials to their Sisters; much less shall they ever disclose them to strangers; but they shall apply to the Rev. Superior, the Mother, the Confessor, or the Sister Servant, God hav-

ing designed them, and no one else, for that purpose. Should any one think, however, before God, that she stands in need of the advice of any other person, she may ask it with the permission of the Rev. Superior or Mother; but never without permission, lest God should permit her to receive bad advice in punishment of her disobedience.

VIII.

They shall observe an inviolable secrecy on all subjects of a secret nature, especially on what takes place in conferences, confidential communications and confessions, being well assured that, besides the offence they would offer to God by revealing a secret, they might create in others an aversion to all these holy practices, and thus render them useless, and to many even injurious. They are not forbidden, however, to speak of anything which the Superior, the Confessor, the Mother, or a Sister may say on such occasions, provided they do so only for the edification of others, and without making known where they heard it, particularly if in confession; but they are never allowed to speak of such things by way of recreation, much less should they ever make any complaints or murmur against them.

Without the express permission of the Rev. Superior or the Mother, they shall not make known their Rules to any person not belonging to their Community, except to their confessors. On the missions the Sister Servants shall keep them locked up in their chambers. They shall neither copy them, carry them out of the house, nor in any way expose them to the inspection of strangers.

CHAPTER IX

Of the Employment of the Day.

The Sisters shall rise at five o'clock, at the first sound of the bell, making the sign of the cross and giving their first thoughts to God. In dressing they shall observe the strictest modesty, putting

on the principal articles of their dress before they draw the curtains of their beds. They shall then bless themselves with holy water and kneel down to adore our Lord, thanking Him for His protection during the night, and offering themselves and all the actions of the day to Him.

At half-past five o'clock they shall say morning prayers in common, commencing with the invocation of the Holy Ghost. The subject of the meditation shall then be read, in the accustomed manner, by one of the Sisters, and they shall meditate for half an hour, concluding by the prayer, "We fly to thy patronage," etc. When convenient to the priest, Mass shall be said at six o'clock, and they shall assist at it with great devotion; but should the priest not come until a later hour, those only will assist at it who can do so without interrupting their necessary duties.

On Communion days a quarter of an hour shall be allowed to those who are going to Communion, as an immediate preparation for that important duty, either after meditation, or at any other time that may suit them better, und a quarter of an hour shall be allowed for thanksgiving after Communion.

They shall breakfast immediately after Mass. After breakfast, the Sisters shall apply to their respective duties, as pointed out to them by the Mother or Sister Servant.

Those who are not occupied in the school, from this time until twenty minutes before twelve, may converse together on any necessary, edifying, or useful subject; but seriously and with greater recollection and in a lower voice than during recreation.

At three-quarters past eleven, they shall assemble in their Chapel, devote a few moments to their particular examen, dwelling on the resolutions which they had taken in the morning, particularly on the acts of virtue which they had resolved to practice, and renewing their resolutions, they shall say then the Seven Glories, etc., the Trisagium and Doxology, and the act of adoration of the Sacred Heart; then read a portion of the Gospel, and conclude with the Angelus Domini or Regina Coeli, according to the season. During Lent, except the last week, they shall read, every day, the portion of the Gospel appointed by the Church for that day; during Holy Week, a part of one of the Gospels on the Passion of our Lord, and, on Sundays and Holydays, the Gospel of the day.

At twelve o'clock they shall repair to the refectory for dinner, during which they shall listen attentively to the reading. When they take their meals in the same refectory with the boarders or orphans, one of the children will read; and, when in a separate room, one of the Sisters. After reading the life of the Saint for the day, if there is time remaining, she shall read from the Following of Christ.

From dinner until two o'clock, while engaged in their different occupations, by way of recreation, they may entertain themselves in friendly, cheerful, and modest conversation, avoiding all kinds of levity in words or actions, too loud talking, screaming, immoderate laughter, rude expressions or behavior, and excessive familiarities,—often raising their hearts to God. Should any one of them offend against the religious decorum enjoined; above all, should she express herself in a manner not perfectly consistent with charity, humility, or modesty, she should be charitably reminded of the presence of God.

At twenty minutes before three they shall assemble for spiritual reading. After the Mother, or presiding Sister, has said "Come, Holy Ghost," one of the Sisters shall read aloud for all the others who can attend without too much inconvenience. She shall conclude the reading by these words: "God is charity; and they who dwell in charity dwell in God, and God in them," etc. During this reading the Sisters shall continue their work in profound silence. At three o'clock they shall go on their knees, and the Mother, or presiding Sister, shall say, in a loud voice: "Jesus Christ became for us obedient even unto death, and the death of the cross, therefore hath God exalted Him," etc.; and all shall join in the adoration of the Son of God, dying for the salvation of souls, offering Him to His eternal Father at the moment He gave up His soul, and entreating Him to apply the merits of His passion and death particularly to those who are in their last agony, or in a state of sin, and to all the souls detained in purgatory. Those who, at this time, are employed in school duties, shall postpone this act of adoration and their spiritual reading to a more convenient time. Those who may be in company with strangers, in the streets, or in any other public place, when they can do it with propriety, shall make this act of adoration interiorly, without going on their knees. If they

cannot make it at this time, they should perform it as soon as possible.

Besides the above spiritual exercises, they shall pass a half-hour daily in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. They shall say, also, every day, one-third of the Rosary. The Mother, or Sister Servant, will appoint the time for these exercises, consulting the convenience of each Sister.

From three o'clock until seven they who are not occupied in the school may converse together, as they are permitted to do in the morning from eight o'clock until twenty minutes before twelve.

They who have permission to learn reading, writing, or any thing else, may employ for that purpose a half-hour, or one hour, either in the morning or evening, or both, at the time the Mother or Sister Servant may find it most convenient to exempt them from their other occupations. They shall be disposed, however, to interrupt this exercise, or even to omit it altogether, when the Mother or Sister Servant thinks it should give place to an occupation of a more urgent nature, so that it may not be in any manner prejudicial to the service of the poor, or to any of the duties of their Society.

At five o'clock, supper. The same rule shall be observed as at dinner, except that some other spiritual book shall be substituted for the "Lives of the Saints" and the "Following of Christ."

From seven until a quarter past eight they may recreate themselves as they did from dinner until two o'clock.

At a quarter after eight the Sisters shall assemble in the community-room or Chapel to say night prayers. After the Mother, or, in her absence, the next officer, and on the missions the Sister Servant, has said "Come, Holy Ghost," one of the Sisters shall read the first two points of the meditation for the next day. On Saturdays, and the eves of festivals of obligation, before the reading of the meditation, a Sister shall read the Gospel appointed by the Church for the next day. When a festival occurs on Sunday, the Gospel of that festival shall be read. After reading the points of the meditation, they shall say night prayers; then they shall repair to the dormitories, and, after having blessed themselves with holy water and said some prayers for two or three minutes, they shall prepare themselves for bed, each one modestly undressing herself, and keeping her curtains drawn as far as practicable.

As they may be called suddenly to wait upon the sick, they shall wear such night dresses as would permit them to appear in the presence of their Sisters at a moment's warning. They must not keep on any article, however, which would interrupt their sleep, be injurious to their health, or be an obstacle to cleanliness.

They shall be in bed, if possible, at a quarter after nine. They shall endeavor to fall asleep with some good thought in their mind, particularly on the subject of the next morning's meditation.

CHAPTER X.

Of Sundays and Holydays.

Mass shall be said at an hour convenient to the priest. The hour of rising, prayer, dinner, supper, and recreation will be the same as on other days; but the intervening time will be filled up differently.

The time appointed above for manual labor and school duties shall be devoted to spiritual exercises, the Divine Service, and the hearing of sermons, spiritual readings out of books approved by the Rev. Superior or his delegates, and catechism for those who are not sufficiently instructed, in order to render them capable of instructing others in things necessary to salvation, etc.

They may reserve, however, a portion of their time for reading and writing, or corresponding with their friends, observing that the greater part of the day be devoted to spiritual exercises.

CHAPTER XI

Of Exercises Peculiar to the Postulants and Novices.

Every day they shall attend an instruction of half an hour, to commence at two o'clock.

Every Wednesday they shall attend a Chapter held by the Mistress of Novices.

CHAPTER XII.

On Petitioning to Renew or Make Their Vows.

The will of each Sister on this point must be made known to the Mother, whose office it is to lay before the Council each petition: and it is the Council that grants or rejects any such petition. At the Mother-House each Sister personally petitions: on the missions, the Sister Servants will copy in their letters to the Mother the following formula, to which each petitioner will subscribe her name in the order of priority. The letter should be written and sent early enough to reach the Mother-House about Christmas.

FORMULA.

We, the undersigned, do humbly petition the Council of the Mother-House to be allowed to renew our consecration to God by the holy vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, in the sense and manner in which they are made at the Mother-House of the Sisters of Charity, of Pittsburgh, Pa.

CONCLUSION.

The Sisters of Charity of Pittsburgh and Allegheny Diocese, shall entertain the highest esteem for their Rules; also, for the holy practices and praiseworthy customs hitherto observed, considering them as the means which God has given them of advancing in the perfection suitable to their state, and of securing more easily their salvation. They shall read their Rules, or hear them read, once a month, and they shall ask pardon of God for the faults committed against them, and endeavor to excite themselves to more fervent desires to observe them faithfully until death. If there is any Rule for which they have a repugnance, they shall endeavor to overcome this repugnance, remembering that our Lord hath said, "The kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence: and the violent bear it away."

"*Thy Law in the midst of my heart.*"

MOST HOLY FATHER:

M. Domenec, Bishop of Pittsburgh, humbly prays that the Sisters of Charity in the Diocese of Pittsburgh may enjoy the same indulgences which were granted by the Apostolic See to the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, in France.

In an audience granted by the Most Holy Father, on the 14th of April, 1871, His Holiness, by Divine Providence, Pope Pius IX. (the undersigned Secretary of the S. Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, reporting), conceded the grace according to the petition, the usual rules being observed.

Given at Rome, Palace of the said S. Congregation, on the day and year above said, gratuitously, and without any fee under what title soever.

H. CAPALTI,
Secretary.

EPISCOPAL RESIDENCE,
Pittsburgh, Aug. 12th, 1871.

Having examined the Rules and Constitutions of the Order of the Sisters of Charity in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, I hereby approve of the same.

† M. DOMENEC,
Bishop of Pittsburgh.

PITTSBURGH, Feb. 13th, 1878.

I have read and examined the Rules and Constitutions of the Sisters of Charity. I approve of the same, and consider them beneficial to, and advantageous for, the wants of my Diocese.

† J. TUIGG,
Bishop of Pittsburgh and Ad'mr. of Allegheny.

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